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President's Forum

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



Your U.S. Naval War College: From Great to Greater

ON JUNE 15, 2018, *your* Naval War College brought to a close the 2017–18 academic year, with all the pomp and circumstance the occasion deserved. We were honored to have Defense Secretary James Mattis address the 544 resident and nonresident students in attendance, from the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, federal civilian agencies, and the College's international programs. When we add in the students who graduated in the November 2017 and March 2018 midyear ceremonies and the 991 students who completed course work through our College of Distance Education programs, we arrive at a grand total of 1,647 students in the class of 2018. That this class is one of the largest in the College's 134-year history serves as one indication of the positive influence this great institution continues to have on the Navy and the nation. Also during this ceremony, we were able to award the first twenty Naval War College international master's degrees ever presented, to a select group of our students from allied nations who worked side by side with their American counterparts in meeting the requirements for this academic degree.

In his commencement remarks, Secretary Mattis stated: *"We are witnessing a world awash in change—a world beset by the reemergence of great-power competition, and we define the categories of challenges as urgency, power, and political will."* He went on to say that he expects the school's graduates *"to be at the top of your game mentally, physically, and spiritually, and to work to maintain that standard throughout the rest of your career."* The graduates, he added, now have *"the credentials to measure up in the crucible of combat, and your character must do the rest."* He closed with an admonition to the students to *"Keep your wits about you, keep your grace under fire, your civility with subordinates; inspiring those you lead*

with humility and intellectual rigor, and reconciling war's grim realities with your political leaders' aspirations."

Just days prior to graduation we hosted the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and many other distinguished visitors during this year's Current Strategy Forum, which served as the capstone event of our academic year. This was the sixty-ninth forum held since the inception of the series, and the theme—"Technology, Innovation, and Strategy"—was particularly relevant to the challenges we foresee for our graduates in the decades to come. The presence of leaders from the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy here in Newport is indicative of the resurgence of interest in and support for the education and professional development of our officers and senior enlisted personnel. In a related subject, we are intensely involved in the Department of the Navy's Education for Seapower study (referred to as E4S), which is being led by Under Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly. He has formed an independent team of subject matter experts to conduct a comprehensive study of learning throughout the Department of the Navy. I will share with you their recommendations when they are made to the Secretary of the Navy early next year.

Looking downrange, this September we will host the twenty-third International Seapower Symposium, titled "Security, Order, Prosperity." This truly unique event, held biennially, often is referred to as the largest gathering of maritime leaders in the history of the world. For nearly a half-century, this symposium has provided a forum for senior leaders from allied navies and coast guards from around the globe to discuss common maritime challenges and consider opportunities to enhance international maritime security cooperation and improve fleet operations. More than one hundred service chiefs and war college presidents will spend three days discussing crucial issues and engaging with panels of distinguished speakers. I will share the results of this major event in future issues of the *Review*.

From my vantage point, I see all the trend lines at the College moving in positive directions. We have taken significant steps to ensure that the College remains the Navy's flagship institution for top-quality graduate and professional military education. The combination of motivated and engaged students, dedicated scholars and teachers, and relevant and constantly refined curricula will ensure that the return on the Navy's and the nation's investment will be direct and sustained. In the years ahead, a large and growing cadre of enlightened critical thinkers will go forth from Newport to succeed in positions of leadership and senior management throughout the national security community of the United States and our friends and allies. The College is committed to ensuring that our alumni

are recognized universally as better decision makers, more effective leaders, and more compassionate and patriotic citizens.

JEFFREY A. HARLEY

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President, U.S. Naval War College